Welcome from the Catholic Chaplain

“No one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins.”

Luke 5:37-38

Over my twelve years as the Catholic Chaplain at Tufts University, I have had the great privilege of supporting and accompanying students as they craft their own new wineskins. As students ask provocative spiritual and theological questions of themselves and others, this experience is often many things at once: challenging, disorienting, exhilarating, and joyous. The new wineskin is needed to support the living, breathing, and ever-changing spiritual lives within us. It takes courage, time, a commitment to justice, and community to do this work well in the world. Our ever-shifting congregation is rooted in hospitality of spirit so that wherever you are on your journey of faith, you feel welcome and beloved in this space. I look forward to seeing the gifts you bring and where the spirit will take us this year.

Pax et Lux,
Lynn Cooper, Catholic Chaplain

Welcome from the Catholic Community

Sean Moushegian, E21, President of the Catholic Community at Tufts

I’m frequently reminded of our identity—the Catholic Community at Tufts (CCT). No arbitrary choice of words, community describes our essence—both what we are and what we aspire to be. CCT has the shape and form that it does because of the individual contributions of its members, present and past. Learning from each member of our community—members new, old, and even those who have graduated—is essential to maintaining a robust, adaptable and enriching Catholic community for us all.

Welcome!
The Catholic Chaplaincy supports sacramental and spiritual life on campus, provides innovative opportunities to deepen relationship to tradition, holds space for difficult questions, and challenges students to expand their worldview so as to live more intentionally and wholeheartedly in community.

History of the Catholic Chaplaincy
The local Boston clergy began ministering to Tufts Catholic students in the 1940s, with Paulist Fathers following in the subsequent decades. Catholic alumni may remember our Newman Center on College Avenue as the center of Catholic life. By the 1980’s, however, Mass was celebrated at Goddard Chapel with the Catholic Center on Winthrop Street housing the chaplain’s office and community space. The University purchased this building and in 2006, it became the Interfaith Center, which marked a new era for multifaith engagement at Tufts.

“I was fortunate to discover the Tufts Newman Center, and meet the Catholic Chaplain, Rev. George “Fitz” Fitzgerald, CSP, who was instrumental in creating a space for students to explore and practice their faith. Tufts Newman turned a child’s understanding of Catholicism into a deeper understanding of faith in action. Both are gifts to last a lifetime.”

Charlie Schiappas, A69

Regular Programming
Please note: We continue to adjust our programming in creative ways to retain the spirit of past events and programs while following Tufts guidelines for the health and safety of the community in the 2020-2021 academic year.

• Catholic Mass followed by fellowship
• Community Dinners
• Weekly Catholic Spirituality Hour
• Fall and Spring Retreat
• RCIA (Rite for Christian Initiation of Adults)
• Shifts at the Harvard Square Homeless Shelter
• The Giving Tree Project during Advent
• Annual Service Corps Sunday to showcase different faith-based volunteer year programs
• Annual Alumni Spirituality Panel

“After a long, busy week of academics, work, and extracurriculars, we always look forward to praising the message of God with Tufts Catholic community. We believe that music is one of God’s ways of healing the soul. Music allows us to present our emotions and feelings to God in their purest form. It also unites the voices of students from all different backgrounds, creating a symphony of praise and strengthening our community. As Catholics, we each walk our own spiritual journey, our unique way of living the word of God. But music reminds us that we don’t walk this journey alone, but rather together.”

Jun Seo, A22
Spotlight Program: The 72
This year we launched a program called The 72, a reference to Jesus sending forth 72 of his friends two by two to go preach and teach ahead of him. Students were paired with a partner and each week they committed time to be together, exploring spiritual practices, developing active skills, and reflecting on their lives.

“As a freshman coming to Tufts, I was a bit unsure about how actively I would be able to engage with the Catholic community at a secular university... but the relationships I built through The 72 truly showed me that one can be a fervent Catholic anywhere. I realized that I did not need to be at a Catholic college to have deep discussions about faith and morality. The women I was paired with showed me how to worship God through friendship, which was a new and invigorating experience for me.”

Katie Furey, A23

“Be it about daily life and religious experiences or even controversial topics such as abortion, the Church sex scandals, contraception, and politics, every new conversation was refreshingly frank and honest. And, consequently, we increased our trust in, and appreciation of, one another. In effect, bound by our faith, we turned from mere acquaintances to good friends.”

Francois Venne, F21

Interfaith Collaboration
With the rise of anti-Semitism over the past few years, the Catholic Chaplaincy and the Protestant Chaplaincy have committed to addressing the deeply troubling history of Christianty and anti-Semitism in our ministry. The goal has been to acknowledge our complicity and embrace our responsibility as Christians to move towards authentic and just allyship with the Jewish community on and off campus. Students have shown great interest in wrestling with these questions. In collaboration with Rabbi Naftali Brawer, Jewish Chaplain and Executive Director of Hillel at Tufts, and Dr. Jennifer Eyl in the Religion Department, we began gathering Christian students to reflect more deeply on how anti-Semitic and anti-Jewish bias has shaped their personal experience of Christianity and faith lives. These burgeoning conversations have been deeply moving and exciting, and will continue.
Alumni Feature: Sofia Estrada, A18

Sofia moved to New York City after graduation and met Karen Gargamelli-McCreight, the founder of the Benincasa Community. This intentional community is lay-led and dedicated to the works of mercy, advocating for justice, and co-creating an inclusive Catholic space in New York City.

She writes, “I was in disbelief that I could so immediately be welcomed into this radical, powerful, and faith filled community. At first, I tried to prove myself by being extra helpful or by touting my interfaith experiences at Tufts. I quickly realized that it didn’t matter. My relationship with God and my personal experiences with Catholicism were not under scrutiny. Through my friendships at Benincasa, I explored and connected with a whole new Catholicism: radical, open, inclusive, lay and women-led—a Catholicism that reminds me of my experience in CCT. This experience has totally impacted the trajectory of my life. It has instilled in me the belief that my experiences and my beliefs as a lay person are meaningful and valuable. In turn, I am empowered to honestly express myself, not just in my Catholic identity, but in my other identities and spheres of life as well.”

Support Catholic Life at Tufts University

Our ministry and programs provide meaningful opportunities for students to explore and engage with their faith. This year will be different from others but we continue to expand in new ways and cultivate a Christian community that welcomes all people and celebrates the beautiful muckiness of lifelong spiritual journeys. We rely on the generous gifts of folks in the pews, families, and alumni to make this possible. We invite you to make a financial contribution to help us continue to provide these kinds of innovative offerings:

$50 Provides community with books and other resources for deeper study of Catholicism

$100 Supports chaplaincy’s programming, including care packages, virtual speakers, and virtual gatherings

$200 Ensures our chaplaincy is ready to support any emergent needs of our community this year

To give to the Tufts Catholic Chaplaincy Fund online, please visit http://go.tufts.edu/giveCatholic. To discuss a major gift, endowment, or bequest, please contact Catholic Chaplain Lynn Cooper or our Advancement liaison Rob Ayles:

617-627-2675 | Robert.Ayles@tufts.edu

Thank you for your generosity and support.